

Situation #1:

The Elementary School Teacher

An elementary teacher was diagnosed with AIDS in October. His pneumonia and fatigue forced him to leave work for the rest of the year. It is now summer. He no longer has pneumonia and his physician says he is well enough to begin teaching again this September. He feels pretty good and plans to return to his classroom. School District policy supports his decision.

What do you think?

- Should he be allowed to teach? Why or why not?
- Would the age level of the children make any difference?
- Who should know about his condition: anyone, staff, parents, students, community?
- If they do know about his illness, what are some potential responses from the principal, other teachers, students, and parents?
- Would your opinions be the same or different if the person was HIV positive but had not progressed to AIDS?
- Other ideas?

Situation #2: The Rumor

Rumor began to surface in a high school health class that a student in the class had tested positive for HIV. The school nurse and teacher asked for help from the District's Health Office.

What do you suggest?

- Should they report this student to the principal? Why or why not?
- What could happen if they talked to the student themselves to find out the truth? What should they do if the student tells them that he/she is HIV positive? What should they do if the student tells them that he/she does not have HIV?
- Should they talk with the class about the harm in spreading rumors and lead a discussion about privacy?
- Should they tell the class it's none of their business and forbid them from discussing it?
- Should they ignore the situation and hope it blows over?
- Other suggestions?

Situation #3: The Basketball Player

A high school athlete is HIV positive. With his family's help, he's doing everything he can to take care of his health – exercise, get plenty of sleep, eat well and take his medication – and he feels good. He's planning to go out for basketball this year. His doctor supports his decision.

What do you think?

- Should he be allowed to play basketball? Why or why not?
- Would he need to behave different than the other players on the court? In the locker room? On trips?
- Would there be a risk of him infecting other players? If so, how?
- Who (if anyone) should know he has HIV?
- How do you think other basketball players would respond if they found out he had HIV?
- Anything else?

Situation #4: Kindergarten

A little girl is HIV positive. She has been attending a preschool in Washington State where the teacher knows about her health status, but other students and their parents do not. She has been having minor illnesses more often (due to having HIV and needing to be on treatment which sometimes make her feel ill) but is well enough to attend school. She is ready for public kindergarten this fall. Her mother intends to send her.

What do you think?

- Should she be allowed to go? Why or why not?
- Who (if anyone) should know she has HIV?
- If the teacher knows, what precautions should be taken (if any)?
- As a parent, how would you feel if your child was in class with an HIV positive child?
- As a parent, would you want other parents or kids to know if your child was HIV positive?
- Is there any chance that attending school might be harmful for the little girl's health? If so, how?

Situation #5: Discrimination

A junior high health class is studying HIV. The teacher tells the class that gay people get AIDS because they deserve it. Later that day, a female student is in tears. Her favorite uncle is gay. She doesn't want to go to her health class anymore.

What advice would you give her?

- Ask her guidance counselor if she can be moved to another health class?
- Try to arrange a guest speaker who can cover the facts about HIV?
- Complain to the principal and demand that the teacher apologize in front of the whole class?
- Write a letter to the teacher explaining why his statement hurt her? How do you think the teacher might respond?
- Talk about it with her family? What do you think that her family could do to help?
- Forget about it and go back to class? How do you think that would affect her participation in class from now on?
- Anything else?

Situation #6: Being a Friend

Your cousin is going with someone and told you they're having sex. They haven't ever used a condom because your cousin says the person doesn't have any diseases and they look clean. And your cousin says condoms break anyway.

- How would your cousin know for sure if the person they're going with had HIV or another STD?
- What would you say to your cousin about "looking clean"?
- Is it true that condoms break a lot or is it just that people sometimes use them incorrectly?
- What could you say or do to help your cousin reduce their risk – to help your cousin not get HIV or another STD?